



State of Wisconsin
Department of Public Instruction
Elizabeth Burmaster, State Superintendent

*****BACK-TO-SCHOOL GUEST EDITORIAL*****

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School year holds promise for all students

By State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster

Wisconsin's 425 public school districts open their doors to the 2006-07 school year in early September, welcoming new and returning students with the enthusiasm that goes along with fresh school supplies and budding friendships.

All across the state, administrators and teachers have spent the summer learning new skills, updating curriculum, or planning new lessons, targeted to helping students achieve.

Public education is a cornerstone of the American success story and the foundation of our democracy. No other nation has made it its mission to educate all students and to work diligently to help all students achieve at their highest potential. Our schools strive for these goals each day in spite of the social and economic challenges students bring to school. Poverty, homelessness, and poor health are among the conditions that impact learning. These are problems our schools cannot solve alone.

Never have I heard of a school or a teacher declaring: "There, we have it all figured out. This is *the* way to do it." Rather each school provides training to improve staff effectiveness, each teacher tries different strategies to reach every student, and each district reaches out to the community to build a shared responsibility toward student success. It is our never-ending devotion to the education of all children that drives our efforts despite the challenges.

There is true joy in being a teacher. No other profession holds such a powerful role for shaping the future. Whether it is helping a child learn to read, watching a student conquer a math concept, or guiding a young person's practice in mastering a new skill, the work of educators makes a

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difference in children's lives. The thrill of a new school year is not just about higher test scores. It is about helping students discover their strengths and reach for their dreams. Education holds a promise for all students.

Let's join together—parents, extended family, educators, business, civic, and industry leaders—around our shared responsibility for our children's education to make 2006-07 a great school year.

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Elizabeth Burmaster is the elected state superintendent of public instruction.

NOTE: To download a high resolution photo of the state superintendent, visit the Department of Public Instruction "Media Contacts and Resources" webpage at < <http://dpi.wisconsin.gov/eis/vm-media.html> >.